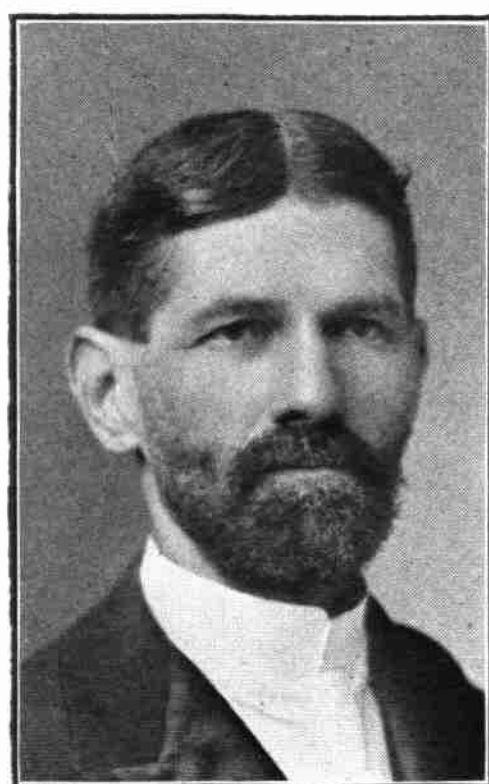


## Practical Needs in Sunday-School Work

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At Clifton Conference, August 19, 1908

**T**HE Bible is required in our school. It seems clear, from what we have heard to-day, that whatever the Sunday-School Association needs to do, it does not need to bring instruction in the Bible into the colored schools of the South. Besides the very large volunteer work that is required in the



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Young Men's Christian Association Bible Class, I have taken a great deal of interest in work along the line of morals. I meet all my students by sections, talk with every man plainly and searchingly, and appeal to the practical moral questions, such as come up in their lives. I try to help them solve these problems. Besides that, I teach the Sunday-school lesson every Sunday night. We have about sixty of our students who teach the lesson in turn on Sunday; but we need instructions in Sunday-school methods, and that is what we would like to have this Association do for us.

### Institutes do Not Reach the People

We cannot reach the majority of the colored people by asking them to come to the institute. We have tried institutes of one kind and another in Virginia, and they have been small gatherings of men who are not the real negroes. They have not reached the people that we want to reach. And they have not produced the effect that we desire. The people that we desire to come do not come. A great many of those who come to the institute know as much as the ones who are there to teach them. The men we want will not come to us, but they can be found in the schools, and they are too busy, or think it is of too little value, to take the time.

Our students are, many of them, the pastors of churches. They are leaders from the moment they get out of the school grounds. They will be found in school. They will be found

almost every Monday morning in ministers' conferences, and if there is any one reason why these institutes are held, it is to get the young people, who are the real leaders, into them. We ought to get the real leaders, and through them get at the Sunday-school teachers, and train those teachers. It seems to me that we do not want many lectures. I do not believe that they produce the effect desired. We had a course, last year, of seven or eight lectures on Sunday-school method and work. They were very fine lectures, but they did not instill into the hearers the habit of doing the things spoken of as well to do.

### Something to Permanently Affect the People

What we want is something that will permanently affect the people. Now, there are two ways of permanently affecting them. I want to emphasize it. Lectures, a good many lectures, is not one of those ways. One way is to spread out the points far enough apart so that the truths of one week will have time to find a lodgment and to be practically put into practice the very next Sunday, and so will become part of the life and habit of the students. My judgment as to Sunday-school method is to have it extend over the whole year. It will be exceedingly defective if it is brought into one month.

### Insist that the Teacher Emphasize Certain Points

If we cannot quite cover as much ground as we might, I think we ought to insist that the teacher emphasize a few certain points. He ought to tell every student in our school that next Sunday they are to put what he has taught them into practice, and to report at the next session what success they have had with them. They ought to try what we teach them before they forget it. Now if that can't be done, there is one other way that is the next best way, and that is, to arouse such interest in the subject on the part of the ministers or any one else at the ministers' conferences, that the district associations and state convention shall be so aroused to the needs of a better Sunday-school system of lessons that those men, themselves, will take it up, and either by well-prepared subjects which this association may recommend or prepare, may study them, or by some system of correspondence with the professors of the universities who have this work in charge will get the right idea of methods and improved work.

If you can arouse their interest to study it themselves, you have done a great deal more than you could possibly get from any course of lectures that did not put what was taught into practice.